

Hi I am Aaron Walsh. I am a 19 year old, sophomore at North Dakota State University majoring in Agriculture System Management. This past year I served as a ND state FFA officer representing over 4,000 students that have Agricultural interests just like me. One of my strongest interests is to come back and farm.

I would love to have an opportunity to farm but I have also been running the numbers through my head and sometimes they don't come out in the black. With land prices rising, the grain prices very unstable, and input costs increasing farming can come across as unpromising to young farmers. How can we solve this problem? Maybe it is by stabilizing the grain prices, creating more farm land to drive the prices down or making inputs cheaper for farmers. We also need to make new opportunities for young farmers so they decide to give farming a chance. A major challenge in my area is finding land that is available for production because a large percentage of land has been converted to CRP or Wildlife areas.

CRP may be a great program in the eyes of many but there are some negatives surrounding this program. First, CRP has taken thousands of acres of good quality land out of the market for young farmers. CRP provides nesting areas for waterfowl and our rising deer population however it does not provide a food supply or shelter in winter storms. Young farmers not only have to compete against big farmers but also CRP for land to rent. Finally, land taken out of production has hurt local farm businesses, grain elevators and especially local schools.

We need the Department of Agriculture to expand markets for Agricultural products. Foreign grain trade and especially beef exports are critical for young producers. The expansion of ethanol, biodiesel and other products will help the future for young farmers.

Sir, I would like to thank you, as a cattle producer, for the positive way you handled the recent BSE situation. Your confidence in our testing and safety in our food supply reassured both consumers and producers. Thank you for visiting North Dakota. We may not be rednecks but we ask you to Get-r-done for the young farmers.